

State of Michigan

State Senate

Senate Veterans, Military Affairs, and Homeland Security Committee

Committee Chair

Senator Margaret O'Brien

Testimony on

Honor and Remembrance Flag

By

The American Legion, Department of Michigan

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Thank you Chairwoman O'Brien and committee members for the opportunity to testify in front of this committee today concerning the Honor and Remembrance Flag. I am testifying from 3 different perspectives, first as a representative of The American Legion Department of Michigan the largest war time era veteran's organization in the state; second as a former blue-star step-father and lastly as a U.S. Marine having served from 1988-1993.

At The American Legion National Convention in 2010, a resolution was brought forth by the Department of California American Legion about the Honor and Remembrance flag was debated and recommended for rejection by the Internal Affairs Convention Committee to the delegates present. There was spirited debate over this issue. In true fashion the delegates applied reason over emotion.

There was also debate on POW/MIA Flag acceptance by the Legion. Once again our delegates applied reason for the POW/MIA flag because there has been no closure yet, we have not accounted for all members of the service and this flag reminds us to keep pushing for everyone of our POWs. It is a symbol to keep it forever on the fore front. If a military member is killed and put to rest with peace there is closure. The US Flag adorns the casket and then the flag is folded and presented to the family with the presenter saying "The Government of the United States presents to you the flag under which he/she so bravely served". There is closure with the US Flag presentation to the family. The question was asked why do we need another banner or flag --- we have "Old Glory". The 2,395 delegates representing 55 Departments responded by rejecting the Honor and Remembrance Resolution. Therefore, The American Legion has no support for it.

As a former Blue Star step-father when my step-son was deployed 3 times, once to Afghanistan and twice to Iraq each time I looked at the 10 foot by 20 foot Garrison flag flying behind our house at a business in Farmington I knew why he was there and was grateful.

As a US Marine when I look at a US Flag, I remember my fellow Marines who have given the ultimate sacrifice; I remember the 22 Michigan Marines from the 1st Battalion 24th Marines. I remember meeting the parents of Marine Major Kevin Nave and giving them a Gold Star banner. Major Nave was one of the first casualties in the war in Afghanistan. Today I remember my 3 Marine brothers who were lost in a training accident last week in Florida. As a Marine Veteran I served this country for the United States Flag and for no other.

Maybe instead of looking for other flags to fly on a flag pole we look to the history of the flag and remember what it means. Red symbolizes Hardiness and Valor ---- White symbolizes Purity and Innocence and Blue represents Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak and I would be happy to answer any questions the committee has for me.